

# Lhasa Tibetan Predicates<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

This paper provides an overview of Tibetan predicates.<sup>2</sup> The structures of Tibetan predicates per se are not overly complex. However, non-Tibetans find it relatively difficult to grasp the meanings expressed by the various predicate structures. When discussing the Tibetan language, the term ‘predicate’ should be taken to refer to the immediate constituents of a sentence that occur at the end of the sentence and can constitute a sentence by itself. In Tibetan, all other constituents are not essential elements of the sentence and do not occur in a grammatically determined order. Thus, these can be thought to fall into the same grammatical category.<sup>3</sup> The following includes an outline of Tibetan predicates while classifying them by structure.

### 1. Predicates of type I auxiliary verbs

The term ‘type I auxiliary verb’ refers to auxiliary verbs that denote the existence of an object or its existence in a certain state.<sup>4</sup> Type I auxiliary verbs take on different phonetic forms in affirmative sentences, negative sentences, polar questions (yes–no questions), and nonpolar (*wh*-questions) or choice questions. Their various forms are shown in the following table:

**Table 1**

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<sup>1</sup> Editor’s note: This article is a translation of Yukawa (1975). The editors thank the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies for permission to publish this translation. We also thank Ulatus for preparing the translation of the original article under the

<sup>2</sup> This outline is based on research conducted at the Toyo Bunko. The informants were Tshering Dolma and Sonam Gyatso. In particular, Sonam answered various questions, thus helping me to revise the content of this article immediately before and after writing it.

<sup>3</sup> In Yukawa 1971 entire sentences such as *^teb`zig`yoo-re* ‘There is one book’ are regarded as predicates. However, an immediate constituent may occur between *^teb`zig`* ‘one book’ and *‘yoo-ree* ‘there is’, which does not lead to a change in the grammatical function of the sentence. Therefore, the previous conceptualization is not appropriate; in the example in question only *‘yoo-ree* should be regarded as the predicate.

<sup>4</sup> These verbs can be used for any given time range if the speaker is clearly aware of the existence at the present moment (in other words, if the sentence can be asserted).

Affirmative	ཡོད་	ཡོད་རེད་	འདྲག་	ཡོང་	བྱུང་
	<i>yöö</i>	<i>'yoo-ree</i>	<i>duu</i>	<i>yon</i>	<i>čun</i>
Negative	མེད་	མེད་མ་རེད་	མི་འདྲག་	མི་ཡོང་	མ་བྱུང་
	<i>mää</i>	<i>'yoo<sup>^</sup>maree</i>	<i><sup>^</sup>minduu</i>	<i>'meyon</i>	<i>'mačun</i>
Polar question	ཡོད་པས་	ཡོད་རེད་པས་	འདྲག་གས་	ཡོང་ངས་	བྱུང་ངས་
	<i><sup>^</sup>yöbää</i>	<i>'yoo<sup>^</sup>rebää</i>	<i><sup>^</sup>dugää</i>	<i><sup>^</sup>yonää</i>	<i><sup>^</sup>čuṇää</i>
Nonpolar/choice question	ཡོད་	ཡོད་ངས་	འདྲག་	ཡོང་	བྱུང་
	<i>yöö</i>	<i>'yoo-rää</i>	<i>doo</i>	<i>yon</i>	<i>čun</i>

Next, let us demonstrate the meanings of these auxiliary verbs using specific examples. First ཡོད་ *yöö*, མེད་ *mää* etc., denote the existence of an object with which the speaker (or the listener in interrogative sentences) feels familiar at a given time (not necessarily at the present).

(1) རང་དེབ་ཡག་པོ་ཞིག་ཡོད།

*'ḡaa      <sup>^</sup>teb      'yago      žig      yöö.*  
 me.DAT    book    good    a      is  
 'I have a good book.'

(2) རང་ཕུ་གཉིས་ཡོད།

*'ḡaa      <sup>-</sup>bugu      <sup>-</sup>ñii      yöö.*  
 me.DAT    child    two    is  
 'I have two children'

Examples (1) and (2) are an ordinary statements, because the speaker is referring to an essentially familiar object or person as familiar. A legitimate sentence is also formed when རང་ *'ḡaa* is replaced with a different pronoun or noun phrase.

(3) རེ་གྲོགས་པོ་དེབ་ཡག་པོ་ཞིག་ཡོད།

*'ḡää      'togoo      <sup>^</sup>teb      'yago      žig      yöö.*  
 me.GEN    friend    book    good    a      is  
 'My friend has a good book.'

(4) རེ་ཨ་ཅག་ལགས་ལ་ཕུ་གཉིས་ཡོད།

*'ḡää      <sup>-</sup>ažaa-laa-la      <sup>-</sup>bugu      <sup>-</sup>ñii      yöö.*

me.GEN elder.sister- DAT child two is

‘My elder sister has two children’

In (3) the speaker feels familiar with the fact that the friend has a good book. For example, the speaker may expect that the friend would be willing to lend the book upon request, thus expressing familiarity concerning the book. Indeed, this sentence will particularly occurs when the friend is a close one. Similarly, example (4) may be used when the speaker expresses familiarity with the fact that his/her own elder sister has children.

There is no need for ཡོད་ *yöo* to express possession; it may also express simple existence, if the situation is compatible with the semantics of the verb.

(5) ས་གི་ར་དེ་ཡག་པོ་ཞིག་ཡོད།

*ˌpagee ˈteb ˈyago žig yöö.*

yonder book good a is

‘There is a good book over there.’

Example (5) is used if the speaker feels familiar with the fact that the book exists, for example, if she placed it over there.

Next, ཡོད་ཅོད་ *yoo-ree*, ཡོད་མ་ཅོད་ *yooˆmaree*, etc., denote the objective existence of an object that was not directly perceived through the senses (or is not specified as such) at a given time.

(6) ཁོང་ལ་དེ་དེ་ཡོད་མ་ཅོད།

*ˌkoŋ-la ˈteb ˈte ˈyooˆmare.*

he-DAT book that NEG.is

‘He does not have that book.’

(7) རང་དེ་དེ་ཡོད་ཅོད།

*ˈŋaa ˈteb ˈte ˈyoo-ree.*

me.DAT book that is

‘I have that book.’

Example (6) is an ordinary statement, denoting that a certain person does not have a particular book, whereas (7) is used if the speaker wishes to emphasize the objective nature of the existence. therefore, it often includes a somewhat special nuance. For example, it can be used to suggest that there is an especially good or rare book (i.e., emphasizing its objective existence).

Next, འདུག་ *duu*, etc., indicate that the speaker has directly perceived the existence of an object through the senses (sight, hearing, touch, etc.) at a given time (present or past).<sup>5</sup>

(8) བ་གི་ར་མེ་ཉོག་འདུག

*̄pagee      ^medoo      duu.*  
yonder      flowers      is  
'There are flowers over there.'

(9) གསང་སྒྱུད་ག་པར་འདུག བ་གི་ར་འདུག་གསལ།

*`saŋžöö      'kabaa      doo?      ̄pagää      ^dugää?*  
restroom      where?      is      over.there      is.Q  
'Where is the restroom? Over there?'

(10) དེ་བ་ཡག་པོ་ཞིག་འདུག

*^teb      'yago      žig      duu.*  
book      good      a      is  
'There is a good book.'

In (8) the speaker is referring to flowers that she has already seen and knows to exist or flowers that are visible at the present moment. The question in (9) is often used when the addressee has gone to a restroom before the speaker, who wants to know where that restroom is.<sup>6</sup> Example (10) shows that *duu* does not only indicate that the speaker simply perceives an *existence* through the senses. This sentence is used when the speaker has read the book well enough to know that it is good.

The speaker may also use རྩ་ *'yaa*... when indicating that she perceived the existence through the senses.

(11) རྩ་དཔུལ་འདུག

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<sup>5</sup> In general, existential verbs are rarely used when describing a future state, because at the present moment, the speaker can assert that an object will exist at a future point in time only in very limited cases, for example, when asserting that she has a class the following day. Because of its meaning of sense perception *duu* is never used when describing a future state.

<sup>6</sup> The speaker might instead ask *'saŋžöö 'kabaa yöö?*, if she is in the addressee's house. In other words, if she presupposes that the addressee feels familiar with the location of the restroom. The speaker might also have asked *'saŋžöö 'kabaa 'yoo-rää?*, if she presupposes that the addressee does not feel that familiar with the location of the restroom and is likely not to have visited it previously.

'ηaa    ηüü    duu.

I.DAT   money   is

'I have money'

This sentence is used, for example, when the speaker reaches into her pocket, touches the money, and realizes it is there.

The next auxiliary verb ཡོད་ *yon* is actually a pair of homonyms in which one expresses an existence about which the speaker has seen or heard in the past, whereas the other expresses a future existence (prediction).

(12) བོད་ལ་གཡག་མང་པོ་ཡོད་།

<sup>^</sup>pöö-la       'yaa   'mango   yon.

Tibet-DAT   yak   many   is

'There were many yaks in Tibet.'

(13) སང་ཉིན་ག་རེ་ཡོད་།

ˉsañin       'kare   yon?

tomorrow   what?   is

'What will happen tomorrow?'

Lastly, སྟོན་ *čun* indicates that the speaker acquired a certain object in the past, or rather, that an object happened to come in her possession.

(14) ཁ་སང་སྤྲུན་དེ་ཅས་བྱུང་།

ˉkāāsa    ˉmān       `dää-ze   čun

yesterday   medicine   some   is

'Yesterday, I got some medicine.'

In addition, type I auxiliary verbs also have negative interrogative forms, such as མེད་པས་ <sup>^</sup>mābää (cf. མེད་ *mää*) and མི་འདུག་གས་ 'mindu-gää (cf. མི་འདུག་ <sup>^</sup>minduu).

It is also possible to say ཨ་ཡོད་ *a-yöð* ‘I wonder if there is/was...’ (present or past) and ཨ་ཡོད་ *a-yoŋ* ‘I wonder if there will be...’ (future), as well as ཡོད་ཅིང་ *yoo^redaa* ‘There is...’ (assertive). However, unlike ཡོད་ *yöð*, the use of ཨ་ཡོད་ *a-yöð* is not restricted to familiar existences, but it denotes conjectural questions about existences in general.

## 2. Predicates of nouns (or noun phrases) and type II auxiliary verbs

Here the term ‘type II auxiliary verb’ refers to auxiliary verbs that denote an attribute in a similar manner to ‘is’ or ‘was.’ The affirmative, negative, polar question, and nonpolar/choice question that are forms of the type II auxiliary verbs are shown below:

**Table 2**

Affirmative	ཡིན་ <i>yin</i>	རེད་ <i>ree</i>
Negative	མིན་ <i>män</i>	མ་རེད་ <i>^maree</i>
Polar question	ཡིན་པས་ <i>^yimbää</i>	རེད་པས་ <i>^rebää</i>
Nonpolar/choice question	ཡིན་མུ་ <i>'yin-baa</i>	རས་ <i>rää</i>

Of these, *yin*, etc., denote a state that exists at a given time and with which the speaker (or the listener in interrogative sentences) feels familiar.

(15) ང་སློབ་ཁྱ་འདིའི་སློབ་ཕྱག་ཡིན།

*'ŋa    labda    'dii        'labtuu    yin*  
I       school   this.GEN   student   is  
'I am a student of this school.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> In sentences like (15) ཡིན་ *yin* does not denote a state at the present moment, but it expresses the state of being a student as a continuous and unchanging state. When an adverb of time is added, ཡིན་ *yin* expresses the continuous and unchanging state that exists in the given time range. Therefore, one can also say ང་ལྟ་སློབ་ཕྱག་ཡིན།

(16) ཁྱེད་རང་སུ་ཡིན་དམ།

*ˈkeraŋ ˈsu ˈyin baa?*

you who? is Q

‘Who are you?’

The auxiliary ཡིན *ˈyin* can also be used in the second or third person if the speaker deems the thing or person referred to as a familiar state.

(17) མོ་ཀ་འདི་ཡག་པོ་ཡིན།

*ˈmoða ˈdi ˈyago yin*

car this good is

‘This car is good.’

(18) ཁོང་སློབ་ཕྱག་ཡིན།

*ˈkoŋ ˈlabɕuu yin.*

he/she student is

‘He is a student.’

(19) ཁྱེད་རང་གྱི་འོག་ལགས་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན་པས།

*ˈkeraŋ-gi ˈoo-laa ˈdebo ˈyinbää?*

you-GEN younger.sibling well is.Q

‘Is your younger brother (or sister) well?’

Sentence (17) is used, for example, when the speaker is boasting about her own car. In (18) the person denoted by ཁོང *ˈkoŋ* is often a family member or a close friend, but the essential meaning here is that the speaker feels familiar with the fact that the person is a student. Its use does not depend on whether the person denoted by ཁོང *ˈkoŋ* is close to the speaker (because འ *ˈja* ‘I’ is not always used with ཡིན *ˈyin*), but it

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*ˈtanda ˈlabɕuu yin* ‘(I am) a student now’, དེ་ནིང་བར་དུ་སློབ་ཕྱག་ཡིན། *ˈdaniŋ ˈpar-tu ˈlabɕuu yin* ‘(I was) a student until last year’, སང་ཉིན་སློབ་ཕྱག་ཡིན། *ˈsaŋiŋ nää ˈlabɕuu yin* ‘(I will be) a student from tomorrow’, etc.

depends on whether the speaker feels familiar with the situation as a whole. As a result, the person denoted by *kon* tends to be someone close to the speaker.

In contrast, *ree*, etc. denote an objective state that exists at a given time.

(20) ཁོ་གི་ཕུམ་སྲུང་སྤུས་མོ་རེ།

*kon-gi z'am süü säämo räa?*

he-GEN wife who?-GEN daughter is.Q

‘Whose daughter is his wife?’ or ‘Who are his wife’s parents?’

(21) ཁོ་སློབ་ཕྱག་རེ།

*kon labtuu ree*

he/she student is

‘He is a student.’

The auxiliary *ree* can also be used to refer to a state associated with the speaker or listener when emphasizing this state as an objective one.<sup>8</sup>

(22) ཁྱེད་རང་འདི་ཏྲ་ཡིན་ན་འད་དགེ་རྒན་རེད་པས།

*keran tendää 'yin-nää gegän rebää?*

you thus but teacher is.Q

‘And yet you are a teacher?’ or ‘And you call yourself a teacher?’

(23) ཁྱེད་རང་སློབ་ཕྱག་རེ།

*keran labtuu ree.*

you student is

‘You are a student.’

Sentence (23) is used, for example, to tell the listener that he/she is a student, thus must study harder.

(24) འདྲོ་སློབ་ཕྱག་རེ།

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<sup>8</sup> It is uncommon to make an assertion about a listener regardless of whether the assertion is positive or negative; however, it is possible to do so when emphasizing an objective fact. Naturally, *ree* is used in such cases.



'*ŋa labtuu ree.*

me student is

'I am a student.'

Whereas a sentence such as (15) above is used to simply report that the speaker is a student (a fact she is imminently familiar with), sentence (24) is used, for example, when the speaker is invited to gamble or asked to marry but wishes to refuse, because as a student, such an action would be wrong or impossible. Here the meaning is attained by describing something that the speaker would normally feel familiar with as an objective state. In other words, the speaker objectively emphasizes the fact that she is a student; thus, the meaning of the sentence subsumes a nuance of obligation associated with being a student. Indeed, in addition to obligation, the meaning of the sentence could include a feeling of pride or inferiority because the speaker is still not fully an adult.

In addition to the forms given in Table 2, type II auxiliary verbs also include the following negative interrogative forms: *མིན་པས་* *^mänbää*, *མིན་པ* *'män-baa* (cf. *མིན་* *män*), *མ་རེད་པས་* *'mare-bää*, and *མ་རས་* *^marää* (cf. *མ་རེད་* *^maree*). They also occur in the following forms: *ཨ་ཡིན་* *^-a-yin* 'I wonder...', *རེད་པ* *'reba* 'It must be', *རེད་ཐང་* *'redaŋ* 'It is, isn't it?', and *རེད་ན* *^redaa* 'asserts a state'. Unlike *yin*, etc., the use of *^-a-yin* is not restricted to states with which the speaker or listener feels familiar. Moreover, there are no forms such as *\*^-a-ree* or *\*yinba*. Furthermore, these auxiliary verbs form predicates in conjunction with nouns and noun phrases.

### 3. Predicates of adjectives and type I (and type II) auxiliary verbs

Adjectives (or adjectival phrases) can form predicates by combining with type I or type II auxiliary verbs. However, the instance of *ཡོད་* *yöŋ* that expresses a past event does not have this function.

Both adjective + *ཡིན་* *yin* and adjective + *ཡོད་* *yöö* denote a state with which the speaker (or the listener in interrogative sentences) feels familiar; however, the former indicates an unchanging state, whereas the latter indicates a temporary state. For example, sentence (25a) expresses an unchanging state, whereas (25b) implies that the speaker feels well at the given time, but may have been unwell (or was unwell) at other points in time. Used by the speaker to refer to herself either (25a) or (25b) simply mean she is healthy, presenting a familiar state as something familiar. However, adjective + *-yin* can also be used to refer to a third person (26) when the speaker feels familiar with the state being described and is therefore often used when the third person is someone close to the speaker.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Editor's note: Yukawa does not mention whether *ཁོང་བདེ་ཡོད་* *koŋ 'debo yöö* is possible.

(25) a. ང་བདེཔོ་ཡིན།

'*ŋa*    '*debo*    *yin*  
me    well    is

b. ང་བདེཔོ་ཡོད།

'*ŋa*    '*debo*    *yöö*  
me    well    is  
'I am well.'

(26) ཁོང་བདེཔོ་ཡིན།

*ˈkoŋ*    '*debo*    *yin*  
he    well    is  
'He is well.'

It is important to note that the familiar state expressed by ཡོད *yöö* must have a specific relevance to the speaker, because ཡོད *yöö* cannot express a *general* state regardless of how familiar the speaker feels. For example, if the speaker wants to say, 'It is cold today,' then she cannot use (27).

(27) \*དེ་རིང་གྲང་མོ་ཡོད།

\*'*terin*    '*taŋŋo*    *yöö*.  
today    cold    is  
\*'Today is cold.'

Adjective + རེད *ree* objectively asserts a certain state (and in interrogative sentences asks whether that assertion can be made.)

(28) a. ཁོང་བདེཔོ་རེད།

*ˈkoŋ*    '*debo*    *ree*  
he    well    is  
'He is well.'

b. ང་བདེཔོ་རེད།

'*ŋa*    '*debo*    *ree*  
me    well    is  
'I am well.'

Sentence (28a), referring to a third person, simply expresses an objective state; (28b), used by the speaker to refer to herself, objectively emphasizes the fact that she is healthy and could contain a nuance of pride or self-depreciation in that the speaker is so busy that she wants to become ill but cannot. It could also be used to emphasize the fact that she is healthy after being told to visit a doctor. Since a speaker is normally familiar with her own well-being, ཡིན་ *yin* and ཡོད་ *yöð* are more usually verbs to use (cf. 25a).

Adjective + ཡོད་ཀྱི་ *'yoo-ree* informs (or asks) the listener (or the speaker in interrogative sentences) about a certain state that he does not know about; generally, neither the speaker nor addressee can observe the state at the present moment.

(29) a. ལྷ་ས་ཀྱི་ལྗང་མོ་ཡོད་ཀྱི་།

*Osaka-la            'tanngo    'yoo-ree*  
Osaka-DAT      cold      is

b. ལྷ་ས་ཀྱི་ལྗང་མོ་རེད།

*Osaka-la            'tanngo    ree.*  
Osaka-DAT      cold      is  
'Osaka is cold.'

When (29a) is used to make the general statement that Osaka is cold, the speaker may have experienced this state before. However, when used to describe a present state, the speaker has, for example, heard this information from someone else or on the radio. In (29b), the speaker makes a general assertion about a continuous and unchanging state.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, ཡོད་ཀྱི་ *'yoo-ree* is not used to state a general truth. For example, if the speaker wants to state the general truth that summer is hot one cannot say (30a), which either presupposes that the listener does not know that summer is hot (perhaps occasionally acceptable in jest) or informs the listener what summer is like somewhere else; to communicate the general truth, normally known to the listener, one must use (30b).

(30) a. རྒྱ་ལྗང་ཆ་མོ་ཡོད་ཀྱི་།

*'yaaga            'cabo    'yoo-ree*  
summer      hot      is

b. རྒྱ་ལྗང་ཆ་མོ་རེད།

*'yaaga            'cabo    ree*

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<sup>10</sup> It is possible to use རེད་ *ree* irrespective of whether the listener knows about the subject; in either case *ree* is used by the speaker to assert her opinion.

summer hot is

‘The summer is hot.’

Adjective + ‘འདྲུག་’ *duu* is used when the speaker (or the listener in interrogative sentences) directly perceives a certain state through the senses and experience some type of emotion or feeling; *duu* is often used with adjectives that describe subjective phenomena (such as hot and cold).

(31) a. དེ་རིང་གྲང་མོ་འདྲུག་

*'teriŋ 'taŋŋo duu*

today cold is

b. དེ་རིང་གྲང་མོ་རེད།

*'teriŋ 'taŋŋo ree*

‘It is cold today.’

Sentence (31a) refers to the speaker’s own perception, whereas (31b) is generally used while observing the temperature on a thermometer. Thus, it is also possible to say the following:

(32) ང་གྲང་མོ་འདྲུག་

*'ŋa 'taŋŋo duu*

me cold is

‘I am cold.’

In sentence (33), the speaker is not simply stating that the flower is red (རེད་ *ree* would be used in this case), but that she experienced a (not necessarily good) feeling about this ‘redness.’

(33) མེ་ཏོག་འདི་མང་མོ་འདྲུག་

*^medoo 'di ^maamo duu*

flower this red is

‘This flower is red.’

This point is further illustrated through the following comparison:

(34) a. མི་ས་གླི་ནག་པོ་འདྲུག་

*'mi ^pagi 'nago duu*

person yonder black is

b. མི་ས་གླི་ནག་པོ་རེད།

*'mi ^pagi 'nago ree*

person yonder black is

‘That person has a dark complexion.’

Generally, (34a) is used when the speaker personally observes the complexion and feels that it is dark, whereas (34b) is used to assert that the person's complexion is dark rather than light; consequently, the person described in (34a) tends to have a much darker complexion than the person described in (34b). Thus, འདྲུག་ *duu* is not used when the property denoted by the adjective can be confirmed by observing the object, but when that property is deeply ingrained in the speaker's own perception. In addition, འདྲུག་ *duu* is still used in such cases, even when describing a familiar state; (32) is another example of this, as is (35):

(35) a. ང་བདེཔོ་འདྲུག་

*'ŋa      'debo      duu*  
me      well      is  
I'm (feeling) good.

b. ཁོང་བདེཔོ་འདྲུག་

*ˈkoŋ      'debo      duu*  
he      well      is  
'He is (looking) good.'

When བདེཔོ་ *'debo* occurs with འདྲུག་ *duu* and describes the speaker (35a), it can mean that the speaker feels good because it is cool or because she has begun to recover from an illness. When used to describe the state of a third person (35b), it infers that the person has a healthy complexion and looks well.

Now, འདྲུག་ *duu* does not occur with adjectives such as གོག་མོ་ *'googoo* (round). Of course, we determine whether an object is round through the sense of sight. However, in this case, the shape of the object is captured objectively because one hardly experiences a compelling sense of roundness when viewing an object.

All three verbs (ཡོལ་རེད་ *'yoo-ree*, རེད་ *ree*, and འདྲུག་ *duu*) describe a state at a given time and they do not necessarily refer to the present moment. Example (36) conveniently contrasts these three verbs as used with adjectives.

(36) a. ཁོང་གི་ལྗང་མཛེས་པོ་ཡོལ་རེད།

*ˈkoŋ-gi      ˈʒam      'zeebo      'yoo-ree*

b. ཁོང་གི་ལྗང་མཛེས་པོ་རེད།

*ˈkoŋ-gi      ˈʒam      'zeebo      ree*

c. ཁོང་གི་ལྗང་མཛེས་པོ་འདྲུག་

*ˈkoŋ-gi      ˈʒam      'zeebo      duu*

he-GEN wife beautiful is

‘His wife is beautiful.’

In the first sentence (36a), the speaker is informing someone who is not well acquainted with the woman that she is beautiful. In the second sentence (36b), the question of whether the woman is beautiful has been raised and the speaker asserts that she is beautiful. In the final sentence (36c), the speaker sees the woman and experiences a compelling sense of beauty.

Adjective + ཡོད་ *yoy* denotes a state that the speaker thinks will occur in the future, whereas adjective + ཅུག *čuy* denotes a passive state experienced by the speaker (or the listener in interrogative sentences) in the past.

(37) སང་ཉིན་གནས་གཤིས་ཡག་པོ་ཡོད་།

*ˈsañin                  ˈnamšii                  ˈyago                  yoy*  
tomorrow                  weather                  good                  is  
‘I am sure the weather will be good  
tomorrow.’

(38) a. ཁ་སང་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན།

*ˈkääsa                  ˈdebo                  yin*  
yesterday                  well                  is

b. ཁ་སང་བདེ་པོ་ཅུག།

*ˈkääsa                  ˈdebo                  čuy*  
yesterday                  well                  is  
‘I felt well yesterday.’

Whereas with ཡིན་ *yin* (38a, cf. 25a) the state of ‘feeling well’ is captured as a continuous and unchanging state, thus implying that although the speaker may feel unwell at the present moment, she did not feel unwell during the relatively long period of the past to the previous day, in contrast, with ཅུག *čuy* (38b) the implication is that the speaker does not normally feel that well, but happened to feel well on that particular day; ཅུག *čuy* expresses that a certain state befell the speaker (or the listener in an interrogative sentence), rather than occurring as the result of her effort.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Moreover, when viewed in this light, the ཅུག *čuy* that follows a noun and the ཅུག *čuy* that follows an adjective can be regarded as the same linguistic unit. However, although the state that befalls the speaker usually involves acquisition of an object, ཅུག *čuy* can also be used, for example, in the event of an earthquake. This use of

Of course, in addition to the affirmative form, the other forms shown in Tables 1 and 2 can also be used with adjectives.

Adjectives can occur in superlative form (for example, ཡག་པོ་ 'yago becomes ཡག་པོས་ 'yagšöo [the best]) in which case they are used as normal adjectives. Adjectives also occur in comparative form (for example, ཡག་པོ་ 'yago becomes ཡག་ག་ ya-ga). However, when these comparative forms occur with affirmative *duu*, then for example, \**ya-ga duu* becomes ཡག་ག་ 'ya-gaa. In contrast, there is a separate comparative form in which ཡག་པོ་ 'yago becomes ཡག་གི་ 'yaagi by combining with the *gi* infinitive (see Section 7), although this construction only occur with རེད་ *ree*.

- (39) a. འདི་པ་གི་ལས་ཡག་ག་  
           'di    p̄agi   lää   'ya-gaa  
       b. འདི་པ་གི་ལས་ཡག་གི་རེད།  
           'di    p̄agi   lää   'yaagi   ree  
           this   that       than   better   is  
           'This is better than that.'

#### 4. Predicates of negative verb forms

There are some Tibetan verbs for which the perfect and imperfect stems (both single-syllable) can be distinguished. For example, the verb 'to eat' has two separate forms བཟས་ 'sää (perfective) and ཟ་ 'sa (imperfective), and the verb 'to go' occurs as ཕྱིན་ 'čin (perfective) and འགོ་ 'do (imperfective). Those verbs that lack this distinction employ a single invariant stem in both perfective and imperfective contexts. A perfect stem negated with the *ma* prefix indicates that the speaker (or a group to which she belongs) did not (of her own will) perform a certain action in the past.<sup>12</sup>

- (40) ཁ་སངས་ཕྱིན།  
           k̄ääsa       'māčin  
           yesterday   NEG.went

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<sup>12</sup> ཅུག vividly illustrates the notion of a befallen state. When a state expressed by a certain adjective befalls the speaker, she does not produce this state through conscious efforts or intentions, but she experiences it.

The negative prefix མ་ *ma* when it precedes verbs beginning with /p, t, k, k̄, t̄, č, c, ʈ, ɭ, ɳ, ɹ̥/ is pronounced voiceless as /m̥a/. However, in this paper, <*ma*> is used for both /ma/ and /m̥a/.

‘I did not go yesterday.’

(41) ཁ་ལག་མ་བཟུགས།

*ʔkalaa    ^masää*

food      NEG.ate

‘I did not eat food.’

This construction indicates that the speaker failed to perform the action out of her own will, such as a situation in which she did not eat because she did not want to eat, i.e. it describes the speaker’s own past action.

## 5. Predicates of verbs and sentence-final particles

Here the term “sentence-final particle” refers to the three particles that denote an interrogative meaning; that is, བཅོ བཅོ *bää*, བཅོ *baa*, and བཅོ *gaa*. First, when བཅོ *bää* follows a perfective verb stem (or བཅོ *ma* + perfective verb stem), it forms an interrogative predicate that inquires whether the listener (or a group to which he belongs) performed a certain action in the past, i.e. it is used for polar questions.

(42) ཁྱེད་པོ་ཁོང་གི་གཞིས་ཁག་ལ་ཐུག་པེ།

*ʔkeray    ʔkoŋ-gi    ʔsimšaa-la    ʔtää    bää?*

you      he-GEN      house.HON-DAT      go.HON      Q

‘Did you go to his house?’ (honorific)

(43) ཁྱེད་པོ་ཁོང་གི་མཚན་པེ།

*ʔšälaa    ʔčöö    bää?*

food.HON    eat.HON    Q

‘Did you eat?’ (honorific)

(44) རེབ་དེའི་གསུང་པེ།

*ʔteb    ʔte    ʔloo    bää?*

book    that    read    Q

‘Did you read the book?’



When བླ་ *baa* occurs with a perfective verb, it forms a predicate expressing a nonpolar question (*wh*-question) that inquires about an action performed by the listener (or a group to which he belongs) in the past.

(45) ཁྱེད་རང་ག་རེ་བྱས་ན་མ་ཐེབས་སྒྲ།

*ˈkeran ˈkare-ˈčää-nää ˈmapee baa?*  
 you why? NEG.go Q  
 ‘Why didn’t you go?’ (honorific)

(46) ཐེབས་སྒྲ། མ་ཐེབས་སྒྲ།

*ˈpee baa? ˈmapee baa?*  
 go.HON Q NEG.go.HON Q  
 ‘Did you go?’ or ‘Didn’t you go?’

(47) ག་རེ་བཟས་སྒྲ།

*ˈkare ˈsää baa?*  
 what eat Q  
 ‘What did you eat?’

(48) དེ་བ་ག་གི་ལྷོག་སྒྲ།

*ˈteb ˈkagi ˈloo baa?*  
 book which read Q  
 ‘Which book did you read?’

When བླ་ *gaa* occurs with a perfective verb, it forms a polar or nonpolar question (*wh*-question) requesting the listener’s opinion about the speaker’s future action (or that of a group to which she belongs).

(49) ང་ཕྱིན་གྲ།

*ˈŋa ˈčün gaa?*  
 me go Q  
 Should I go?

(50) ངག་པར་ཕྱིན་གྱུ།

'ŋa 'kabaa `č̣in gaa?

me where? go Q

Where should I go?

In addition, there is another instance of གྱུ་ gaa, which from a semantic viewpoint accords with that described above. When this གྱུ་ gaa follows an imperfective stem, it forms a nonpolar question (*wh*-question) requesting the listener's opinion about a future action performed by the listener (or a group to which he belongs) or a group to which the listener and speaker belong.<sup>13</sup>

(51) ངག་ཉིས་ག་པར་འགོ་གྱུ།

ŋaɳii 'kabaa 'ḍo gaa?

we.two where? go Q

'Where should we (two) go?'

(52) ཁྱེད་རང་ཚོ་ག་རེ་མཆོད་གྱུ།

ˈkeraŋ-co 'kare `č̣öö gaa?

you-PL what? eat.HON Q

'What will you (plural) eat?' (honorific)

## 6. Predicates of Verbs and Auxiliary Verbs

Here the term 'auxiliary verb' refers to type I auxiliary verbs (except the past form of ཡོད་ yod) and སྐྱོད་ soṅ, ཆོག་ čoo, ཆར་ caa, མྱོད་ ñoṅ, and འདུག་ du. First, let us examine sentences in which these auxiliary verbs follow a perfective verb stem. When ཡོད་ yöö follows a perfective verb stem, the predicate indicates a state in which the results of a past action still remain and with which the speaker (or the listener in interrogative

<sup>13</sup> In the case of verbs for which the perfective and imperfective forms cannot be distinguished, this construction requests the listener's opinion regarding an action performed by the speaker, the listener, or the speaker and listener: རེབ་ག་གི་ཁྲིམ་གྱུ་ 'teb 'kagi 'loo gaa? 'Which book shall I read' or 'Which book will you read?' However, when གྱུ་ gaa occurs with an honorific verb, it is not used as a question about the speaker's own action: ག་རེ་མཆོད་གྱུ་ 'kare 'č̣öö gaa? 'What will you have?' or 'What shall we eat?' (honorific). In Tibetan, when referring to an action that will occur in the future, the speaker can use an honorific expression even if she is one of the actors, provided that the listener is also an actor. This is why 'What shall we eat?' is a possible interpretation.

sentences) feels familiar. Accordingly, the person who performed the action is someone with whom the speaker has a close relationship (including the speaker herself).

(53) ངས་བཟས་ཡོད།

*'ŋää        ˈsää    yöö.*  
me-ERG    eat    is  
'I have eaten.'

(54) མུག་གུ་འདི་བཟས་ཡོད།

*ˈbugu    'di    ˈsää    yöö.*  
child    this    eat    is  
'This child has already eaten.'

(55) དེ་དུས་དེ་བ་དེ་གྲོག་ཡོད་པས།

*ˈtetüü        ˈteb    'te        'loo    ˈyöbää?*  
that.time    book    that    read    is.Q  
'Had you already read the book at that time?'

Sentence (53) is used, for example, when the speaker politely refuses food because she has already eaten, asserts that she is not or will not be hungry, or apologizes for eating someone else's food. Sentence (54) is a case where a third person who performed the action has a close relationship with the speaker; either he has already finished his dinner or has eaten so much he cannot eat more. Sentence (55) is possible as a question when the listener is being asked about a certain book in an oral examination; it shows that perfective verb form + *yöö* is not only used when the action occurred at a point in time before the present moment but also when the action occurred earlier than a point of time in the past.<sup>14</sup>

When ཡོད་པས་ *'yoo-ree* follows a perfective verb form, the clause expresses an action that occurred in the past, the result of which can be presumed or known to remain in some form; the predicate denotes that the state described is objective and not directly perceived through the senses.

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<sup>14</sup> The possibility of a pluperfect reading also exists for perfective verb + ཡོད་པས་ *'yoo-ree* or འདུག་ *duu*. Note that these constructions are only rarely used to refer to an action that occurred before a point of time in the future, because it is difficult to assert the completion of this action at the present moment. They can be used when describing definite plans such as when you want to say that you "will have finished work" when someone arrives tomorrow.

(56) ཚང་མ་ཐེགས་ཡོད་ཅིང་།

*caŋma    ˈpee    ˈyoo-ree.*  
everyone    come.HON    is  
'Everyone is here.' (honorific)

(57) ཁོང་གིས་ཞལ་ལག་མཚན་ཡོད་ཅིང་།

*ˈkoŋ-gi    ˈʂälaa    ˈčöö    ˈyoo-ree.*  
he/she-ERG    food.HON    eat.HON    is  
'He will have already eaten (it seems).'

(58) དེ་ལ་གསུངས་ཡོད་ཅིང་།

*ˈteb    ˈpagee    ˈtʰii    ˈyoo-ree.*  
book    yonder.DAT    write    is  
'It is written in that book.'

The assertion in (57) is based on the assumption that the man has already eaten, because it is past dinner time, which implies that it would not be rude to visit him now. In (58), the speaker is teaching the listener something that she knows to be true.

This form can also be used to refer to the speaker herself if it denotes an objective state. In particular, it is normal to use such a sentence when the speaker cannot accomplish the action according to her own will. Sentence (59) denotes that the action of 'getting used to' has occurred. It is often used because the speaker cannot 'get used to something' of her own will.

(59) ང་ལས་ཀྱི་འདྲ་ལ་གོས་ཡོད་ཅིང་།

*ˈŋa    ˈlääga    ˈdindäa-la    ˈkom    ˈyoo-ree.*  
me    job    like.this-DAT    get.used.to    is  
'I am used to this kind of job.'

In addition, when འདྲ་གྱི་ *duu* follows a perfective verb, the predicate denotes a action the result of which is directly perceived through the senses. However, བཞག་ *śaa* is used in affirmative sentences.

(60) བྱི་འདྲི་ཤི་བཞག་

*ki di ši šaa.*

dog this die is

‘This dog is dead.’

(61) དེ་འདྲ་བྲིས་མི་འདུག

*denḁää ḁii minduu*

like.that written NEG.is

‘Such a thing is not written.’

Example (60) is used when the speaker is looking at or touching a dog lying on the ground, and (61) is used when she is looking at the section of a book being referred to.

This form can also be used when describing the speaker’s own action if she feels the result of a past action at the present moment or perceives (through the senses) a change in the self that has occurred external to her own will.

(62) ཁ་ལག་བཟས་བཞག

*kalaa sää šaa*

food eat is

‘(Come to think of it) I have already eaten.’

(63) རྒྱག་བཞག

*ṭaa šaa*

recover is

‘I have recovered.’

In (62), the speaker has forgotten that she had already eaten and recalls this when she attempts to eat again but does not feel hungry. In this case, the notion that the speaker ‘discovered’ something is permissible. However, this nuance is external to the idiosyncratic meaning of the verb + འདུག *duu* (བཞག *šaa*) construction and can be explained through the situation in which the speaker (who ought to know that she has already eaten) claims to have perceived this anew through a different sense; a situation that cannot occur unless forgetfulness has occurred. In (63), something has happened to the speaker that is external to her will and can be perceived because she feels well at the present moment (cf. exx 74 and 81).

Next, when བཞག་ *a-yöö* follows a verb, it expresses a meaning similar to “I wonder...” (about a past event) and bears no relation to whether the speaker feels familiar with the event.

(64) ཁོ་ཕེབས་ཨ་ཡོད།

*ˈkoŋ ˈpee ˈa-yöö*

he/she go is

‘I wonder if he was there.’ (honorific)

Next, when ལྱོ ལྱོ follows a perfective verb form, it expresses the notion that a certain action somehow befell or happened to the speaker (or the listener in interrogative sentences). Also note that *ču* (still written ལྱོ) is the form that is generally used in an affirmative sentence.

(65) ཁོ་གིས་དེ་སྒྲོག་བྱས།

*ˈkoŋ-gi ˈteb ˈloo ču*

he-ERG book read is

‘He read the book.’

(66) ཁོ་གིས་མཚོད་བྱས།

*ˈkoŋ-gi ˈčöö ču*

he-ERG eat.HON is

‘He ate with us’ (honorific).

(67) ཁྱིའི་འབྲས་བཟས་བྱས།

*ˈčiüü ˈdää ˈsää ču*

small.bird-ERG rice eat is

‘The rice was eaten by a small bird.’

Sentence (65) may express various states. The person may have read the book for the speaker, read it upon the request of the speaker, or inconvenienced the speaker by reading it aloud in her vicinity. Examples (66) and (67) exhibit the same types of interpretations; in (66) the speaker feels herself benefited by the dinner guest’s presence, in (67) she is annoyed at the bird’s activity. Incidentally, ལྱོ ལྱོ can be used when none of the above conditions are present, that is, if the nature of the verb is such that it denotes an action directed

toward the speaker as in example (68)<sup>15</sup> and (69). However, this usage is limited to situations where ‘directionality affecting the speaker’ is rather specific. It cannot be used to say, ‘I lost my father.’

(68) ཁོང་ཕེབས་བྱུང་།

*ˈkoŋ ˈpee ɕu*  
he come.HON is  
‘He came.’ (honorific)

(69) ཡི་གེ་ལྔ་འབྱོར་བྱུང་།

*ˈyigi ˈŋa ˈʒoo ɕu*  
letter five receive is  
‘Five letters arrived.’

Now, even when the event described relates to the speaker, it expresses a change that befell or happened to the speaker, as the following examples show.

(70) ཁོང་མཐོང་བྱུང་།

*ˈkoŋ ˈtoŋ ɕu*  
he see is  
‘(I) met him.’

(71) ད་ལྟ་ཨོ་ས་ཀ་ལ་སླེབས་བྱུང་།

*ˈtanda Osaka-la ˈlee ɕu*  
now Osaka-DAT arrive is  
‘(I) just arrived in Osaka.’

(72) ཐུབ་བྱུང་།

*ˈtub ɕu*  
able is

---

<sup>15</sup> Sentence (68) can also be used when the person was invited by the speaker or caused inconvenience by his/her arrival; although these uses appear to differ, the meaning of ཕེབས་བྱུང་ *ˈpee ɕu* is the same.

‘(I) did it’ (could do it).

(73) རན་བྱུང་།

*ʼŋa ʼna ču*  
me ill is  
‘I fell ill.’

If the speaker becomes ill, she uses (73). However, when the speaker has recovered from an illness she may use (74); it implies that she did not recover naturally but was treated by a doctor or with medicine. Although it is easy to interpret illness as a state that befalls the speaker, recovery can be interpreted in two ways: either as a naturally occurring state or a state that is achieved through some external factor (that is, a factor that befalls the speaker, also cf. ex. 63).

(74) རྟེན་བྱུང་།

*ʔaa ču*  
recover is  
‘(I) recovered.’

Because use of རྟེན་ *čuŋ* includes the nuance that the event has occurred because of some external factor, asking someone who had caught a cold the following question would generally not be appropriate.<sup>16</sup>

(75) རྟེན་བྱུང་ངམ་།

*ʔaa ʔčuŋää?*  
recover is-Q  
‘(Have you) recovered?’

The correct way to ask someone if they have recovered from a cold is as follows:

(76) རྟེན་འདུག་གམ་།

*ʔaa ʔdugää?*  
recover is-Q  
‘(Are you) feeling better?’

---

<sup>16</sup> Such a sentence might be used if the illness is ongoing and the speaker has not seen the listener for a while. Furthermore, in terms of nuance, this sentence implies that the “recovery” has happened as a whole or that the person has made a complete recovery.



Next, the auxiliary verb མོང་ *soŋ* (normally *so* in the affirmative, which is still written མོང་, མ་མོང་ '*masoŋ* in the negative, མོང་ངམ་ *^soŋää* in polar questions, and མོང་ *soŋ* in nonpolar/choice questions) indicates that the speaker directly perceived a certain past action through the senses at the time that this action was performed.

(77) ལུ་གཞས་བཏང་མོང་།

*ˌsu ˈsää ˌdan soŋ?*  
 who? song sang is  
 Who sang the song?

(78) ཁོང་ཕེབས་མོང་།

*ˌkoŋ ˈpee so*  
 he came.HON is  
 'He came.' (honorific)

(79) ཁོང་ཕེབས་མོང་ངམ་།

*ˌkoŋ ˈpee ˈsoŋää?*  
 he come.HON is-Q  
 'Did he come?'

Sentence (78) is used when the speaker was present and saw (or guessed from a noise) the person arrive; in (79) the speaker asks whether the addressee saw him come.

The form མོང་ *soŋ* can also be used to denote an action performed by the speaker or the listener if the action is perceived objectively.

(80) ང་ལྷན་ལ་སླེབས་མོང་།

*ˈŋa ˌŋän-la ˈlee so*  
 me earlier-DAT arrive is  
 'I got there earlier.'

(81) ང་རྒྱ་མོང་།

*ˈŋa ˈtaa so*

me recover is  
'I have recovered.'

(82) ཆམས་པ་བརྒྱབ་སྤང་།

*čaŋba    ġab   so*  
cold      get    is  
'(I) caught a cold.'

Sentence (80) is used, for example, in a race when two people cross the finish line roughly at the same time and then contest who crossed the finish line first. Thus, the speaker in this case is stating an objective fact. Sentence (81) simply means that the speaker has recovered (cf. examples 63 and 74). Sentence (82) is used, for example, when the speaker goes outside after being in a warm room and sneezes. Let us compare (82) with the following sentence.

(83) ཆམས་པ་བརྒྱབ་བྱུང་།

*čaŋba    ġab   ču*  
cold      get    is  
'(I) caught a cold.'

Sentence (83) suggests that such an event happened to the speaker because of an external factor and is often used when the speaker is confined to her bed with a cold. It is not used when the speaker experiences a minor symptom such as a sneeze. In example (84), if climbers reach the top of a mountain and say (84a) it simply means 'we are at the top,' but if they say (84b) then it includes a strong nuance of relief about finally making it to the summit.

(84) a. སླེབས་སྤང་།

*'lee      so*

b. སླེབས་བྱུང་།

*'lee      ču*

arrive    is

'We arrived.'

In general, the auxiliary verb སྤང་ *soŋ* is used quite frequently.

Next, when ཚོག་ *čoo* (negative form མི་ཚོག་ *me čoo*) occurs, the speaker is reasoning that it would be permissible for him/her to perform a certain action.

(85) རས་ཉལ་འདི་བཟས་ཚོག་

<sup>^</sup>*ŋää*        *'ñaša*        *'di*    <sup>^</sup>*sää*    *čoo*  
me-ERG    fish.meat    this    eat    is  
'I can eat this fish.'

Next, ཚར་ *caa* indicates the completion of an action performed by the speaker.

(86) རས་དེབ་འདི་ཁྲོག་ཚར་

<sup>^</sup>*ŋää*        <sup>^</sup>*teb*        *'di*        *'loo*        *caa*  
me-ERG    book        this        read        is  
'I have finished reading this book.'

Although ཚོག་ *čoo* and ཚར་ *caa* also exist as main verbs, it can be thought that the stems of these two particular verbs have been used as auxiliary verbs.

Next, let us examine sentences in which auxiliary verbs follow imperfective stems. First, when མྱོང་ *ñon* (negative form མ་མྱོང་ *'mañon*, polar question མྱོང་རས་ <sup>^</sup>*ñonää*, and nonpolar/choice question མྱོང་ *ñon*) follows an imperfective stem, the predicate marks the speaker's (or the listener's in interrogative sentences) experience, thus indicating that she "has done" something.

(87) རབོད་ལ་འགོ་མ་མྱོང་

*'ŋa*    <sup>^</sup>*pöö-la*        *'do*    *'mañon*  
me    Tibet-DAT    go        NEG.is  
'I have never been to Tibet.'

Next, when འདུག་ *duu* follows an imperfective stem, it produces a meaning similar to "let's" (or "let's not" when it is preceded by the negative marker མ་ *ma*).

(88) ཁོང་གི་གཟིམ་ཤག་ལ་ཐལ་འདུག་

*kon-gi*        <sup>^</sup>*simšaa-la*        *'tää*        *du*

‘Let’s go to his/her house.’ (honorific)<sup>17</sup>

The term “infinitives” is here used as a general name for all forms in which connective morphemes, such as  $\text{ba}$  and  $\text{gi}$ , directly follow verb stems. I will call each of these the  $\text{ba}$  infinitive and the  $\text{gi}$  infinitive, respectively.

(89) འདི་པ་མགོ་སྒྲིག་པ་ཡིན།  
*ŋa    teb         ˉpagi                  ʼloo-ba      yin.*  
I   book   yonder   read-INF   is  
‘I read that book.’

While མྱོད་ *män* may take the place of ཡིད་ *yin* with negatives, in a question about the past actions of an interlocutor, the verb + final particle བློ་ *bää* (for polar questions) or བློ་ *baa* (for nonpolar questions) are used, as we saw in section 5.

(91) རེ་པ་ལགས་ཀྱི་གར་ལ་གཤེགས་པ་རེད།

<i>'ŋää</i>	<i>ˈbaa-laa</i>	<i>'ḡagaa-la</i>	<i>ˈṣaa-ba</i>	<i>ree.</i>
me-	father-	India-	die-INF	is
GEN	hon.	DAT		

'My father died in India.'

<sup>17</sup> As discussed in note 13, in Tibetan, the speaker can still use an honorific form (in this case `tää) even if she is involved in the action provided that the listener is also an actor.

(92) ཁོང་གིས་བཟས་པ་རེད།

*koŋ-gi      <sup>^</sup>sää-ba      ree.*  
 he-ERG      ate-INF      is  
 'He ate it.'

Sentence (91) is not to mean that the speaker witnessed the final moment (in that case one would say, གཤེགས་སྐྱོད་ *'saa so*), but rather means that the results of the death have had some lasting effect in the present (as with verb + ཡོད་ *yöö*, etc., note that this is not a direct effect). Sentence (92) is used, for example, as an answer to a question about what happened to the food that was left on the table. However, this sentence is not used to assert that the speaker saw the man eat the food but to state that the food was gone because the man ate it. The form verb + ཡོད་ *yoo-ree* discussed above indicates that a certain action occurred in the past and denotes its direct result. For example, བཟས་ཡོད་ *<sup>^</sup>sää 'yoo-ree* implies that a person ought to be full because he/she has eaten, whereas the བ་ *ba* infinitive + རེད་ *ree* indicates that a certain action occurred and that its influence affects the current situation in some way. Therefore, (92) includes the nuance that the food has gone.

(93) ཡག་པོ་བ་རེད།

*'yago      <sup>^</sup>saa      ree*  
 well      eat      is  
 '(He) eats a lot.'

However, because the perfective and imperfective forms of regular verbs cannot be distinguished, a single infinitive can have more than one meaning:

(94) ཁོང་གིས་ཞི་དགས་ལྷོག་པ་རེད།

*'koŋ gi      'šeḏaa      'loo-ba      ree*  
 he-ERG      very      read      is  
 'He reads a lot' or 'He read a lot.'

This could either mean that the man is a keen reader or it implies that his extensive reading in the past is affecting his current situation.<sup>18</sup> In a question, རེད་ *ree* may be replaced with རེད་པས་ *rebää* or རེས་ *rää*, but there are two types of negative forms.

- (95) a. ཁོང་ཁ་སངས་མེད་པ་རེད།  
           <sup>~</sup>koŋ      <sup>~</sup>kääsa      <sup>~</sup>mapee-ba      ree.  
           he/she    yesterday    NEG.come-INF    is  
       b. ཁོང་ཁ་སངས་མེད་པ་མ་རེད།  
           <sup>~</sup>koŋ      <sup>~</sup>kääsa      <sup>~</sup>pee-ba      ^maree.  
           He/she    yesterday    come-INF      NEG.is  
           ‘He did not come yesterday.’

Whereas the former implies ‘did not come’ in the normal sense (with, of course, the nagging sense of a lasting effect), the latter has the sense that yesterday was (simply) not the day that the person came.

Next, where ཡོད་ *yöö* is affixed to the perfective ས་ *ba* infinitive, it expresses an inference as to someone’s apparent past action(s).<sup>19</sup>

- (96) ཁོང་ཕྱིན་པ་ཡོད།  
           <sup>~</sup>koŋ      <sup>~</sup>čin-ba      yöö.  
           he/she    come-INF      is  
           ‘It seems like he went.’

Unlike the case wherein ཡོད་ *yöö* affixes directly to the stem, this has no relation as to whether said action can be regarded to be familiar.

<sup>18</sup> The question arises whether these two cases of ཁོང་ཁ་སངས་མེད་ *loo-ba ree* are homonyms. In the first meaning, the speaker knows about a past action and feels its effects in some form at the present moment, whereas in the second, the speaker describes a person’s habitual action. However, even in the second meaning, the speaker must have some form of knowledge of the person’s past actions. Moreover, neither of the meanings includes the notion that the speaker has directly observed the action. Thus, these cases of *loo-ba ree* do not appear to be homonyms, but a unified form in which the speaker (while recalling a past action) recognizes the continuation and effects of that past action in some form at the present moment. Furthermore, it is reasonable to conclude that the expression includes cases that focus more on the point of time in the past or the state at the present moment. To be sure, there are times when the speaker uses (94) without thinking about which point in time she is focusing on. In other words, it is uninterrupted and continuous.

One may note that ཁོང་ཁ་སངས་མེད་ *loo-ba ree* has two negative forms མ་ཁོང་ཁ་སངས་མེད་ *maloo-ba ree*, which may be translated ‘He did not read’ and ཁོང་ཁ་སངས་མེད་ *loo-ba^maree* which denotes habitual action. However, the different position of *ma* suffices to explain the difference between these two forms in structural terms. Moreover, note that in the case of habitual actions, this form can also be used to refer to an action before or after the given point in time if it is included in the habit: ཁ་སངས་ཁོང་མེད་པ་མ་རེད་ *~kääsa ~koŋ ^pee-ba ^maree*, which explains that, ‘Yesterday was the day that he does not come’ and སངས་ཁོང་མེད་པ་མ་རེད་ *~sanjij ~koŋ ^pee-ba maree*, which explains that, ‘Tomorrow is the day that he does not come.’

<sup>19</sup> In this case, འདྲེན་ *duu* is not used, since the inferential meaning of the construction is incompatible with the sensory evidence encoded by འདྲེན་ *duu*. If one had seen a past event one would know it occurred and not speculate about whether or not it occurred.

There are also examples where the ་ -*ba* infinitive is created from the imperfect stem (when affixing to single-syllable stems, e.g. ཟ་ 'sa, འགྲོ་ 'do, or རྩེད་ 'ce 'do', these take forms such as ཟ་བ་ ^*saa*, འགྲོ་བ་ ^*doo*, and རྩེད་པ་ ^*čää*, and when these are affixed with ཡོད་ *yöö* or འདུག་ *duu*, they become predicates expressing inference.<sup>20</sup> Examples affixed with ཡོད་ *yöö* express general inferences about past or future actions, whereas those affixed with འདུག་ *duu* express the case where the basis for an inference about a future action is understood directly from one's own senses.<sup>21</sup>

- (97) ཁོ་འགྲོ་བ་ཡོད།  
 ་*koŋ*    ^*doo*            *yöö*.  
 he/she    come-INF        is  
 'It looks like he will go.' or 'It looks like he went.'

- (98) ཁོ་དེ་རིང་ཁ་ལག་ཟ་བ་འདུག།  
 ་*koŋ*    'terin    'kalaa    ^*saa*        *duu*.  
 he/she    today    food        eat-INF        is  
 'It looks like he will eat the food today.'

Note that the ་ *ba* infinitive, in addition to its functions in the formation of predicates, also has nominal uses.

- (99) མི་ཐེབས་པ་དེ་སྐྱེ་རྒྱ།  
 'mi            'pee-ba            'te    ་su        räa?  
 person        come.HON-INF        that    who        is.Q  
 'Who was that person who came?' (honorific).

<sup>20</sup> Now, ཡོད་པ་ *yoo-ree* does not follow the imperfective ་ *ba* infinitive. The omission can be understood as semantically motivated; when making an inference, it is likely that the speaker either regards the event as something familiar (thus making the inference familiar) or perceives through the senses the evidence on which the inference is based.

<sup>21</sup> The reason why the imperfective ་ *ba* infinitive + འདུག་ *duu* cannot be used to make inferences about past events is explained in note **Error! Bookmark not defined.19**. Conversely, the ་ *ba* infinitive + འདུག་ *duu* can be used when discussing future events because, quite naturally, although a future action itself cannot be confirmed, any amount of evidence suggesting that a certain action will be performed can be directly perceived through the senses.

(100) བོད་ནས་ཐེབས་པའི་མི་

<sup>^</sup>*pöö nää `pee-bää 'mi*

Tibet from come.HON-INF.GEN person

‘The person who came from Tibet.’ (honorific)

In sentence (99) ཐེབས་པ་ *`pee-ba* is used as an adjective (cf. མི་ནག་པོ་དེ་ *'mi 'nago 'te* ‘that black-skinned person’). In sentence (100) ཐེབས་པ་ *`pee-ba* occurs as a noun. This is the reason why I have chosen to regard these forms as ‘infinitive’ predicates.

Next, the གི་ *-gi* infinitive, which is formed from the imperfect stem (e.g. ཟ་ *'sa* → ཟ་གི་ *'sagi*, འགྲོ་ *'do* → འགྲོ་གི་ *'dogi*), may take ཡིན་ *yin*, རེད་ *ree*, ཡོད་ *yöö*, ཡོའོ་རེད་ *yoo-ree*, or འདུག་ *duu*.

The གི་ *-gi* infinitive affixed with *yin* express a future action on the part of the speaker (or the group to which she belongs).<sup>22</sup>

(101) སང་ཉིན་ནས་སློབ་སྦྱང་ཡག་པོ་བྱེད་གི་ཡིན།

<sup>-</sup>*sañin-nää `lobžon 'yago 'čegi yin.*

tomorrow- study good do- is

ABL INF

‘I will study hard from tomorrow.’

(102) ཟ་གི་ཡིན།

*'sagi yin.*

eat-INF is

‘(I) will eat.’

While མིན་ *mān* takes the place of ཡིན་ *yin* with negatives, in a question about the actions of an interlocutor, polar questions, rather than using the གི་ *gi* infinitive + ཡིན་པས་ <sup>^</sup>*yinbää*, takes the form གི་ *gi* infinitive + པས་ *bää*, whereas the nonpolar questions takes the form གླ་ *-gaa*, as shown in section 5.

(103) ཟེད་རང་སློབ་གྲྭ་ཐལ་གི་པས།

<sup>-</sup>*keran `labḍaa `täägi bää?*

you school go-INF Q

<sup>22</sup> It deserves emphasis that this construction can never be used with actions of a third or second person (except of course for interrogative sentences for the second person).



‘Will you go to school?’

(104) ཕ་གིས་ཐལ་གྱི་པས།

*ˌpagee ˌtäägi bää?*

over.there go.INF Q

‘Are you going to go there?’ or ‘Shall we go?’

(105) ག་པར་ཐལ་གྱ།

*ˌkabaa ˌtää gaa?*

where? go Q

‘Where will you go?’

When རེད་ *ree* follows the གྱི་ *-gi* infinitive, this expresses an objective action in the future or something that lasts from the present into the future.

(106) ཁོང་སངས་ཉིན་ཐེབས་གྱི་རེད།

*ˌkoŋ ˌsañin ˌpeegi ree.*

he/she tomorrow come.INF is

‘He will come tomorrow.’

(honorific)

(107) ཇི་ཕིན་ལ་ཆར་པ་མང་པོ་བཏང་གི་རེད།

*ˌribin-la ˌçaaba ˌmango ˌdan̄gi ree.*

Japan- rain lots.of fall.INF is

DAT

‘Lots of rain fall in Japan.’

(108) ཁོང་དེབ་ཞེ་དྲགས་ལྷོག་གི་རེད།

*ˌkoŋ ˌteb ˌʂɛdaa ˌloogi ree.*

he book a.lot read.INF is

‘He reads a lot of books.’

(109) ང་ཡག་པོ་བླ་གི་རེད།

*ˌŋa ˌyago ˌsagi ree.*

me a.lot eat.inf is

‘I eat a lot’ or ‘I am a big eater.’

As indicated by sentence (107-109), in addition to a straightforward future this form is also used to express generic facts.<sup>23</sup> With negatives, རེད་ *ree* is replaced by མ་རེད་ *maree*, in polar questions it becomes རེད་པས་ *rebää* and in nonpolar questions རེད་པར་ *rää*. The form \**mapeegi ree* does not exist.<sup>24</sup>

Next, when the གྱི་ *gi* infinitive is followed by ཡོད་ *yöö*, this forms a predicate that expresses a habitual, repetitive, or sustained action on the part of the speaker (or in a question, on the part of the interlocutor) at a certain point in time.

- (110) རང་ལྟ་དེ་བརྒྱུ་གི་ཡོད།  
`*ŋa* `*tanda* *teb* *loogi* *yöö*.  
me now book read.INF is  
‘I am reading a book at the moment.’

- (111) ཁོང་ཕེབས་དུས་དེ་བརྒྱུ་གི་ཡོད།  
`*koŋ* `*pee-düü* `*ŋa* *teb* *loogi* *yöö*.  
he/she come- me book read.INF is  
time  
‘When he came, I was reading.’

- (112) ཟླ་རང་གིས་ག་རེ་གནང་གི་ཡོད།

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<sup>23</sup> Note that in Japanese 6 時におきる is used to say both ‘I get up at 6’ and ‘I will get up at 6’ although the former denotes a generic action and the latter denotes a future action.

The attentive reader may wonder how (94) and (108) differ when they both refer to habitual actions. According to the informants, for (94) it is likely that the speaker somehow got to know this fact in the past and states that the man reads a lot as a present continuation of this action. Conversely, in (108), the speaker avoids the question of whether she confronted this fact in the past by describing the action as an incomplete and certain event. Therefore, the speaker makes the latter statement with a certain degree of conviction and a nuance of deep interest.

<sup>24</sup> As discussed in note (**Error! Bookmark not defined.**18) it is possible to say ཁས་ཁོང་ཕེབས་པ་མ་རེད་ `*kääsa* `*koŋ* `*pee-ba* *maree*, but it is not possible to say \**kääsa* `*koŋ* `*peegi* *maree*. The གྱི་ *gi* infinitive + རེད་ *ree* categorically expresses a definite action that is not complete and is within the scope of a given time if a time marker is present or for an unrestricted period of time if a time marker is not present. Then, it expresses such a habit when it denotes an action within a period of time that is effectively unrestricted such as ཉིན་ལྟ་རེ་ཞིག་ `*ŋindaareši* (every day). Conversely, when the མ་ *ba* infinitive + རེད་ *ree* denotes a habit, it captures an action as a continuation of a past action and thus expresses a more temporary and unstable habit allowing an action to be expressed as if it were a part of a habit, even if it occurred on a certain day. Accordingly, the use of the གྱི་ *gi* infinitive + རེད་ *ree* gives a sense that the speaker is more interested in that habit and has more conviction.

<sup>ˈ</sup>kerəŋ-    ˈkare    ˈnanɡi    yöö?  
*gi*  
 you-ERG    what?    do(hon.).INF    is  
 ‘What are you doing?’ (honorific)

- (113) དྲུ་ཁ་ལག་ཟ་གི་ཡོད།
- <sup>ˈ</sup>tanda    ˈkalaa    ˈsagi    yöö  
 now    food    eat.INF    is  
 ‘(I am) eating now.’

- (114) ཉིན་ལྟར་སློབ་གླ་འགོ་གི་ཡོད།
- ŋindaa    ˈlabʈaa    ˈdɔgi    yöö  
 every.day    school    go.INF    is  
 ‘(I) go to school every day.’

- (115) དཔྱད་གི་དབྱར་ཀ་ཉིན་ལྟར་རེ་ཤིག་རྒྱལ་རྒྱབ་གྱི་ཡོད།
- <sup>ˈ</sup>daŋiŋ-*gi*    ˈyaaga    ˈŋindaareʃi    ˈgää    ˈgaaɡi    yöö  
 last.year-GEN    summer    everyday    swim    swim.INF    is  
 ‘I swam day in and day out last summer’ or ‘I was swimming every day last summer.’

In negative cases, ཡོད་ *yöö* is replaced by མེད་ *mää*.

Next, affixing ཡོད་ཅེད་ *ˈyoo-ree* to the གྱི་ *gi*- infinitive results in a predicate that expresses a habitual, repetitive, or sustained action at a certain point in time that is *not* understood directly from one’s own senses.

- (116) སློབ་སྦྱང་བྱེད་གྱི་ཡོད་ཅེད་པས།
- <sup>ˈ</sup>lobcun    ˈcegi    ˈyoo<sup>ˆ</sup>rebää?  
 studying    do.INF    is.Q  
 ‘I guess he is studying, right?’

- (117) ཁོང་དུ་སློབ་སྦྱང་བྱེད་གྱི་ཡོད་ཅེད།
- <sup>ˈ</sup>kon    ˈtanda    ˈlobʂon    ˈcegi    ˈyoo-

he/she now studying do.INF is *ree*.  
 ‘He is studying now.’

(118) ཁྱེད་རང་ཕེབས་དུས་ཕྱག་གུ་འདི་སློབ་གྲ་འགྲོ་གི་ཡོད་རེད།

*ˈkeraŋ ˈpeetüü ˈbugu ˈdi ˈlabʈaa ˈdogi ˈyoo-ree*  
 you come.time child this school go.INF is  
 ‘This child will be at school when you come here.’

This construction is also used to describe the speaker’s own action as an objective fact:

(119) དེ་དུས་ར་ཡང་ལས་ཀ་བྱེད་གི་ཡོད་རེད།

*ˈtɛtütü ˈŋa ˈyaŋ ˈlääga ˈčegi ˈyoo-ree*  
 that.time me also work do.INF is  
 ‘I will be working at that time.’

Affixing འདུག་ *duu* to the གི་ *gi*- infinitive results in a predicate that expresses a given action at a certain point in time that has been understood directly from one’s own senses. However, in a case where the གི་ *gi* infinitive is affixed with the affirmative འདུག་ *duu*, the form *-gii* (still written གི་ etc.) is used instead.

(120) ཁོ་ངུ་གི་

*ˈkoŋ ˈŋugii*.  
 he/she cry.INF  
 ‘He is weeping.’

(121) ཁོ་ངེས་ད་ལྟ་ཞལ་ལག་མཚོད་གི།

*ˈkoŋ-gi ˈtanda ˈšālaa ˈčöögii*  
 he/she-ERG now food eat.INF.is  
 ‘He is eating now.’ (honorific)

(122) མི་པ་གི་ག་རེ་ཟེར་གི་འདུག

*ˈmi ˈpagii ˈkare ˈsegi doo?*  
 person yonder what? say.INF is.Q  
 ‘What is that person saying?’

This construction can also be used with the first person as shown below:

(123) རས་ཡག་པོ་བ་གི

<sup>^</sup>*ŋää*      *'yago*    <sup>^</sup>*sagii*  
me.ERG    well    eat.INF.is  
'I eat a lot.'

(124) རམ་གོན་གི

*'ŋa*    *'go*    <sup>^</sup>*nagii*  
me    head    ill.INF.is  
'I have a headache.'

Sentence (123) produces the sense that the speaker is viewing his/her own behavior from the outside, whereas (124) is used when the speaker perceives (through the senses) the occurrence of an event that is beyond her control.

Although the གྱུ་ *gü* infinitive is often used as a verbal noun denoting the target of a verb, apart from this, its use in predicates is relatively uncommon. It is used in the following three situations, viz. with ཡིན་ - *yin*, རེད་ -*ree*, and མ་བློན་ - *mačun*.

When *yin* affixes to the གྱུ་ *gü* infinitive, created when གྱུ་ *gü* affixes to the imperfect stem (e.g. སྐྱེ་ *'sa* → བ་གྱུ་ *'saḡu*, འགོ་ *'do* → འགོ་གྱུ་ *'doḡu*), this form expresses the speaker's intention to perform an action in future the that he or she has not yet initiated.

(125) རཡི་གེ་དེ་འགྲི་གྱུ་ཡིན།

*'ŋa*    *'yige*    *'te*    *'ṭiḡu*    *yin*.  
me    letter    that    write.INF    is  
'I have still to write that letter.'

(126) རཁ་ལག་བ་གྱུ་ཡིན།

*'ŋa*    *'kalaa*    *'saḡu*    *yin*  
me    food    eat.INF    is  
'I am still to eat.'

When རེད་ *ree* follows the གྱུ་ *gü* infinitive, it is often used to refer to the planned actions of the second or third person.<sup>25</sup>

(127) ཁོང་ཕེབས་གྱུ་རེད།

*ˈkoŋ ˈpeeɡu ree*  
he/she arrive.INF is  
'He is still to arrive.'

There is no negative or interrogative equivalent of གྱུ་ཡིན་ *gü-yin* or གྱུ་རེད་ *gü-ree*.<sup>26</sup>

Next, when མ་བྱུང་ *'mačun* affixes to the གྱུ་ *gü* infinitive, this forms a frequently used predicate that expresses a past action that the speaker did not take because of an external agency.

(128) ཁ་སང་ཇ་ཉོ་གྱུ་མ་བྱུང་།

*ˈkääsa ˈča ˈnoɡu ˈmačun.*  
yesterday tea buy.INF NEG.is  
'I did not buy tea yesterday.'

(129) ཁ་སང་བ་ཉོ་གྱུ་མ་བྱུང་།

*ˈkääsa ˈsaɡu ˈmačun*  
yesterday eat.INF NEG.is  
'I did not eat yesterday.'<sup>27</sup>

However, when we look at བ་ཉོ་གྱུ་ *'saɡu čun*, we find that this is not the affirmative equivalent of བ་ཉོ་གྱུ་ *'saɡu ˈmačun* but takes the meaning that the speaker was able to acquire something to eat (བ་ཉོ་གྱུ་ *'saɡu*).

<sup>25</sup> Note that the གྱུ་ *gü* infinitive has a completely different meaning when it occurs with རེད་ *ree*, as in འགོ་གྱུ་རེད་ *'doɡu ree* 'no choice but to go,' 'have to go', or འགོ་གྱུ་མ་རེད་ *'doɡu ˈmare* 'must not go'. Etymologically speaking, གྱུ་ *gü* originally denoted the nominal form or target of a verb. Therefore, this usage of གྱུ་ *gü* has diverged to form two different meanings in modern Tibetan. Because a semantic category exclusively shared by both uses of གྱུ་ *gü* cannot be presumed, this pair constitutes pure homonyms at the synchronic level.

<sup>26</sup> Apparently, a child may be corrected for producing a sentence such as བ་ཉོ་གྱུ་ *'saɡu män*.

<sup>27</sup> The difference between this form and མ་བྱུང་ *ˈmasää* observed in section 4 is that མ་བྱུང་ *ˈmasää* implies that the speaker did not eat of his own will, whereas the གྱུ་ *gü* infinitive + མ་བྱུང་ *'mačun* implies that circumstances did not allow the speaker to eat.

The ཅིས་ *zii* infinitive, formed by affixing ཅིས་ *zii* to the imperfect stem (e.g. ཟ་ 'sa → ཟ་ཅིས་ *^sazii*, འགོ་ 'do → འགོ་ཅིས་ *^dozii*) may be affixed with ཡོད་ *yöö*, ཡོའོ་རེད་ 'yoo-ree, or འདུག་ *duu*. Affixing ཡོད་ *yöö* forms a predicate that expresses familiarity with respect to the intention of the action.

- (130) རེ་ཕུག་གུ་སྒྲོབ་སྒྲོབ་ཅིས་ཡོད།  
           <sup>ʼ</sup>ηää      <sup>ˈ</sup>bugu      <sup>ˈ</sup>lobzɔŋ      <sup>ˆ</sup>čezii      yöö.  
           me.ERG    child      study      do.INF    is  
           ‘My child will study (intention).’

Affixing 'yoo-ree expresses the objective existence of an intention, whereas affixing *duu* implies that such a plan is understood directly from one's own senses. The fact that the *zii* infinitive is not treated the same manner with normal nouns can be understood from a comparison of the following two sentences.

- (131) ར་རྒྱ་ནག་ལ་འགོ་ཅིས་ཡོད།  
           <sup>ʼ</sup>ηa      <sup>ˆ</sup>ganaa-la      <sup>ˆ</sup>dozii      yöö.  
           me    China-DAT      go.INF    is  
           ‘I plan to go to China’

- (132) རར་དེབ་ཅིག་ཡོད།  
           <sup>ʼ</sup>ηaa      <sup>ˆ</sup>teb      žig      yöö.  
           me.DAT    book    a      is  
           ‘There is one book for me.’

First, there is the difference between ར་ 'ηa 'I' and རར་ 'ηaa 'for me'. Second, if འགོ་ཅིས་ *^dozii* were a noun, then the phrase ར་རྒྱ་ནག་ལ་འགོ་ཅིས་ *^ganaa la ^dozii* should be impossible.

The འདོད་ *döö* infinitive, which can be created by affixing འདོད་ (*n*)*döö* to the imperfect stem (e.g. ཟ་ 'sa → ཟ་འདོད་ *^sandöö*, འགོ་ 'do → འགོ་འདོད་ *^dondöö*), may also take ཡོད་ *yöö*, ཡོའོ་རེད་ 'yoo-ree, and འདུག་ *duu* and expresses the hopeful desire (to do something). Their respective semantic differences are the same as those in the case of the ཅིས་ *zii* infinitive. However, there are two ways for the speaker herself to express desire:

- (133) ར་བོད་ལ་འགོ་འདོད་ཡོད།  
           <sup>ʼ</sup>ηa      <sup>ˆ</sup>pöö-la      <sup>ˆ</sup>dondöö      yöö.  
           me    Tibet-DAT      go.INF      is  
           ‘I want to go to Tibet.’

- (134) ར་བོད་ལ་འགོ་འདོད་འདུག།  
           <sup>ʼ</sup>ηa      <sup>ˆ</sup>pöö-la      <sup>ˆ</sup>dondöö      duu.  
           me    Tibet-      go.INF      is  
                   DAT  
           ‘I want to go to Tibet.’

The former expresses a somewhat rational desire, whereas the latter expresses a kind of inner desire “that springs from the heart.”

## 8. Other Predicates

There are various forms for giving orders or asking favors. Often used, as expressions for ཟླ་ 'sa, for instance, are the rather rough imperative ཟླ་ 'söö ('Eat!') (with མ་ཟླ་ 'masöö for the negative imperative 'Don't eat!'), the rather softer imperative ཟླ་ཤིག་ 'söö ši and the polite request form ཟླ་གནང་ -roo naŋ, which is suffixed to the honorific form of verbs that have such or the imperfect stem of verbs that do not.

- (135) མཚོད་ཟླ་གནང་།  
           `čööröo       naŋ.  
           partake-INF do  
           'Please partake' (e.g., of a meal)

- (136) ཟླ་ཟླ་གནང་།  
           `looroo       naŋ.  
           read-INF do  
           'Please read.'<sup>28</sup>

For the sense of 'please don't ...' there are two options:

- (137) མ་མཚོད་ཟླ་གནང་།  
           `mačöö-roo       naŋ.  
           NEG.partake-INF do  
           'Please do not partake.'

- (138) ཟླ་མ་གནང་ཟླ་གནང་།  
           `loo    `manay-roo       naŋ.  
           read NEG.do-INF do  
           'Please do not read.'

Generally in this construction, if a verb is to be negated with མ་ ma, in order to make the usage honorific the verb is accompanied by the suffix གནང་ -naŋ, with མ་ ma prefixed to གནང་ -naŋ. This particular case is

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<sup>28</sup> The verb མཚོད་ 'čöö 'partake' is the honorific equivalent of 'eat'; ཟླ་ 'loo 'read' has no honorific form and when necessary may be affixed with གནང་ -naŋ (the honorable form of a verb meaning 'to do') to form ཟླ་གནང་ 'loo -naŋ 'do please read'.



odd in so far as, although one does not say \**’loo ’nan-roo nan*, the second གནད་ *’nan* does appear in the negative version.

Although there are various other predicate constructions, we will not touch on these here.

## 9. Some Features of Tibetan Predicates

The features of Tibetan predicates, in a word, are complicated.

For example, ཡིན་ *yin* affixes to nouns or adjectives to express a situation that feels familiar to the speaker (or in the case of a question, to the interlocutor). When affixing to the ལ་ *-ba* or གི་ *-gi* infinitive, it expresses only the actions of the speaker. While we cannot completely rule out the possibility of explaining why this is so from the difference between a static state and the inherent dynamism that accompanies this difference, grammatically speaking, it may be best to consider these two instances of ཡིན་ *yin* as separate entities. In other words, it would seem better not to think of the latter ཡིན་ *yin* as a separate auxiliary verb but rather that the entire construction linked with the infinitive should constitute a variant (i.e., inflection category) of each verb. This has been a factor contributing to foreigners’ sense of the complexity of the language.

Next, it has been pointed out that the structure of predicates that give affirmative, negative, or interrogative expression to certain actions do not necessarily correspond clearly with one another, leading to a sense of further complexity even beyond that of the facts stated above.

- |    |                     |                   |
|----|---------------------|-------------------|
| a) | འགོ་གི་ཡིན།         | ‘(I) will go.     |
|    | <i>’dogi yin.</i>   |                   |
|    | འགོ་གི་པས།          | ‘Will you go?’    |
|    | <i>’dogi bää?</i>   |                   |
|    | ག་པར་འགོ་གྲ།        | ‘Where will you   |
|    | <i>’kabaa ’do</i>   | go?’              |
|    | <i>gaa.</i>         |                   |
| b) | ཕྱིན་པ་ཡིན།         | ‘(I) went.’       |
|    | <i>’čin-ba yin.</i> |                   |
|    | མ་ཕྱིན།             | ‘(I) did not go.’ |
|    | <i>’mačin.</i>      |                   |
|    | འགོ་རྒྱུ་མ་བྱུང།    | “                 |
|    | <i>’dogu</i>        |                   |
|    | <i>’mačuṅ.</i>      |                   |
| c) | ཕྱིན་པ་རེད།         | ‘(He) went.’      |

' <i>čin-ba ree.</i>	
མ་ཕྱིན་པ་རེད།	'(He) did not go.'
' <i>mačin-ba ree.</i>	
ཕྱིན་པ་མ་རེད།	“
' <i>čin-ba ^maree.</i>	

Here, the examples in a) lack any clear correspondence between the affirmative and interrogative uses, whereas those in b) lack a clear correspondence between the affirmative and negative usages. Finally, comparing b) and c), we find that though there are two types of negatives for the actions of a speaker and a third party, their respective structures are completely inconsistent.

#### 10. Concluding remarks

Finally, let us consider what overall we may learn from the semantics of Tibetan predicates.

First, while researching Tibetan predicates, I have sensed the diversity of ways in which we organize real world phenomena and our own thoughts through a language. Not one of the methods of expression aforementioned includes a range of meaning that corresponds to those of English or Japanese. Such a situation is logically inevitable; nonetheless, when we actually engage in this type of research, its extent is revealed beyond our expectations.

Furthermore, only research on the structure and meaning of predicates has allowed us to clearly recognize that the semantic unities that give meaning to the concepts of internal linguistic factors are not purely objective; to varying degrees they also include subjective factors. It is also clear that the Tibetan language offers a rich variety of expressions that are governed by these subjective factors. In other words, when researching the meaning of these linguistic units, it is important to objectively identify what types of subjective elements express various events and, both objectively and subjectively, clarify the qualities upon which the concept of a semantic unity is grounded.

The second aspect that I have learned from Tibetan predicates is that when researching the meaning of a certain linguistic unit, it is generally not possible to reach an accurate conclusion about it without focusing on the unit itself. That is, it is not possible to accurately describe the meaning of that linguistic unit by inferring it from the meaning of another linguistic unit. For example, when the speaker refers to her own past action 'I ate,' she uses བཟས་པ་ཡིན་ *^säa-ba yin* (བཟས་པ་མིན་ *^säa-ba män* cannot be used here), whereas the negation of the speaker's past action can be expressed by the two forms མ་བཟས་ *^masää* and ཟ་སྤྱོད་ཁྱེད་ *'saḡu 'mačuṅ*, which have different meanings. Incidentally, this clearly shows that certain divisions exist in some cases, but not in others. In other words, the meanings of linguistic units correspond

conceptually to individual semantic unities, thereby showing that individual research must be conducted for each one. Indeed, I do not propose that research on the meaning of other linguistic units is not useful as a reference. In fact, it goes without saying that the results of describing the meanings of ཡོད་ *yöo*, མེད་ *mäa*, etc. in nominal and adjectival predicates was extremely helpful when looking into the meaning of their verbal counterparts. However, it is important to avoid superficial analogies by clearly recognizing that there is no reason why a difference in the meaning between two linguistic forms must also exist in other situations. In addition, it is theoretically invalid for a certain quality included in a semantic unity corresponding to a certain linguistic unit to also exist in an identical form in a semantic unity corresponding to a different linguistic unit.

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